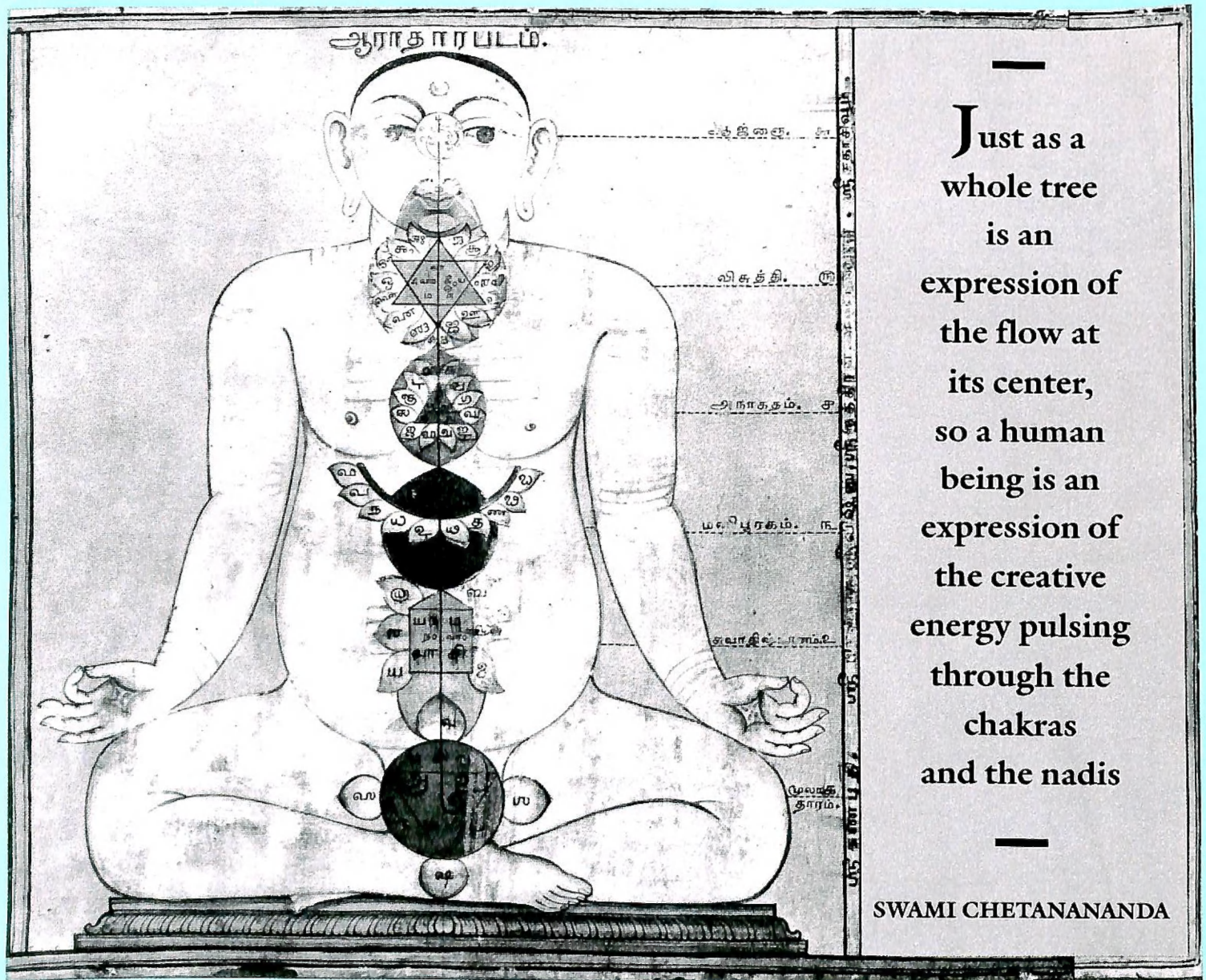


# Rudra



—  
Just as a  
whole tree  
is an  
expression of  
the flow at  
its center,  
so a human  
being is an  
expression of  
the creative  
energy pulsing  
through the  
chakras  
and the nadis  
—

SWAMI CHETANANANDA



## NITYANANDA INSTITUTE

The Nityananda Institute, headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a non-profit center dedicated to the active practice of a spiritual life. Named for the Indian saint who is its wellspring and inspiration, the Institute is under the direction of Swami Chetanananda, an American spiritual master in the tradition of Kashmir Shaivism. The presence of this living teacher and the opportunity for sustained contact with him gives the Institute its unique character.

The Institute sponsors many programs, ranging from a full residential program to quarterly Retreat weekends to courses in hatha yoga. The heart of the practice is the daily kundalini yoga meditation program in Cambridge which is open to occasional and regular visitors alike, after completion of the Introductory Program. And for information and study, the Institute's Rudra Press offers a fine selection of translated texts and contemporary spiritual writing.

### FRIENDS

FRIENDS of the Nityananda Institute is the resource development vehicle that helps support the programs and activities of the Nityananda Institute. Your financial contributions, volunteer work, or in-kind donations directly affect the Institute's ability to serve you, and are always gratefully received. If you wish to contribute to FRIENDS and receive a quarterly Newsletter detailing current and proposed projects, please send your tax-deductible donation to: NI/Friends, P.O. Box 1973, Cambridge, MA 02238.

### ABOUT THE COVER

19th century painting from Tanjore showing the Chakras in the subtle body related to the spine. Courtesy of Ajit Mookerjee.



The Nityananda Institute® logo is styled after a photograph of the young Nityananda, c. 1930.

NOVEMBER, 1988 (VOL. 10, NO. 4)

# RUDRA

## CONTENTS

FEATURE	The Sound of Inner Resonance	4
	<i>How chanting can lead to the experience of Oneness.</i> Duncan Soule	
LIFESTYLES	"Why Am I Here?"	7
	<i>What brings someone to a spiritual practice, and what keeps them there?</i> Melanie Rubin	
POETRY	Reflections	10
	<i>A collection of poems by Institute members.</i>	
TEACHER	Instead of Reaching Out, Reach In	14
	<i>Through inner work, we understand that our consciousness is infinite.</i> Swami Chetanananda	
HATHA YOGA	How to Sit More Comfortably	19
	<i>Understanding how the knee works improves your ability to sit in meditation.</i> Debbie Carpenter Thrall	
NEWS	A Message to Our Readers	21
	<i>Rudra needs your contributions.</i>	
FEATURE	Can Ethics be Taught in the Classroom?	22
	<i>Ethical behavior emerges only from the discipline of an inner practice.</i> Rachel Gaffney	
BACK COVER	Swami Chetanananda	24

### STAFF

Managing Editor: Aurelia Navarro

Editor: Patricia Slote

Contributors: Linda Barnes, Connie Dyer, Rachel Gaffney, Melanie Rubin, Laura Santi,

Angie Shoemaker, Duncan Soule, Debbie Thrall

Production Manager and Designer: Leslie Goldstein

Production Assistant: Pindy Kutil

Photographs: Barry Kaplan, Patricia Slote, M.D. Suvarna

Illustrations: Leslie Goldstein, Debbie Thrall

Reprints from: *TANTRA: the Indian Cult of Ecstasy* by Philip Rawson,  
and *Tantra Art*, by Ajit Mookerjee. Courtesy of Ajit Mookerjee.

RUDRA is published quarterly by Rudra Press, an imprint of the Nityananda Institute, P.O. Box 1973, Cambridge, MA 02238. Suggested annual donation, \$25.00. Copyright ©1988, Nityananda Institute, Inc. All rights reserved. Nityananda Institute and the Nityananda Institute logo are federally registered trademarks of the Nityananda Institute, Inc.



## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The Self is in continual celebration of itself, and our lives are but a form of that celebration. Consciousness itself, the highest reality, expresses its absolute freedom and joy by playing itself out as you and me. Isn't that a paradoxical wonder? Yet it is a central understanding of our spiritual practice, emerging from a continual examination of the nature of our own experience. Not only are we individualized manifestations of Consciousness, but we also have the capacity to recognize and reflect upon our own source. Our celebration – our practice – consists of exploring that reflectivity. The understanding that arises from this practice expands our horizons and enriches our life to an unimaginable degree.

Which brings us to the thread that ties together the articles in this issue of *Rudra*. Each piece in its own way demonstrates consciousness examining itself, reflecting on the nature of experience, and celebrating the expansion of understanding that results. Together, they express the love, inspiration, and skill that emerge naturally from such reflection, and suggest to a small extent the fullness of the Self.

As Swamiji tells us in his lead article, our external life comes forth from within us. When we cultivate awareness of the source of all that we experience – our mind, emotions, and physical life – then our understanding becomes clear, deep, and true. "Growing is about making choices that continually expand your horizons."

Duncan Soule combines careful observation with knowledge from philosophy, modern science, and the teachings of Swamiji in a superb articulation of the practice of chanting. In describing what it feels like, his deep love shines through.

For an absorbing account of beginning a spiritual practice and incorporating it into a busy life, read Melanie Rubin's article. Despite her initial struggles (with which we can easily identify), her intense self-scrutiny has brought recognition of a deeper voice.

A contrasting approach to self-study is taken by Rachel Gaffney, an MBA candidate at Harvard Business School, who looks at some serious ethical issues in the business world and proposes a practical spirituality as the guiding principle for behavior.

Our hatha article is contributed by Debbie Thrall, a long-time practitioner who combines her love for hatha and her study of physical therapy into a very helpful explanation of the workings of the knees – something many people find tricky when they begin a sitting meditation practice.

In all, we think you will find this issue a stimulating mix of wide-ranging topics all dancing around one central subject. Join our celebration, and delight in yourself.

THE RUDRA STAFF

Drawing : Shiva as Nataraja, Lord of Dance. Shiva dances in ecstasy to the eternal tunes of the cosmos. The dance itself represents the activity of Shiva as the source of the universe.

Lineage is a flow of grace that transcends time and space.

### NITYANANDA

Nityananda lived in southwest India from the late 1800s to 1961. Over the years, he attracted thousands to the remote jungle village of Ganeshpuri. Why did they come? Certainly not because it was easy, since conditions were harshly primitive, and Nityananda rarely spoke. They came simply to be in his presence, and they were satisfied. Such a holy man is called an avadhut in Sanskrit – a living miracle of pure consciousness in human form. Timeless and eternal, the avadhut is a direct link to the Absolute, containing all teachers who went before him and all who follow. The grace of the avadhut Nityananda flows in our lineage.

### RUDI

One of the thousands who visited Ganeshpuri was Rudi. Born in Brooklyn in 1928, Rudi had long been actively pursuing spiritual development when he went to India in 1958 and had the meeting with Nityananda that changed the course of his life. Returning to New York, he taught thousands of students in the U.S. and Europe.

One of the first Americans to be recognized as a Swami, Rudi was a totally new spiritual manifestation: a fiery fusion of East and West whose only interest was the inner transformation of growth and transcendence.

### SWAMI CHETANANANDA

Born in the Midwest in 1948, Chetananda went to New York to meet Rudi in 1971 and immediately knew that this was his teacher. After Rudi passed away, Chetananda became head of the ashram organization Rudi had begun. In 1978 he was initiated as a Swami, formalizing his unwavering commitment to spiritual growth. The opportunity for an immediate, personal relationship with a true teacher is a rare treasure. Swamiji, a thoroughly contemporary American, provides the living link to the timeless lineage that flowed through Nityananda and Rudi.



# THE SOUND OF INNER RESONANCE

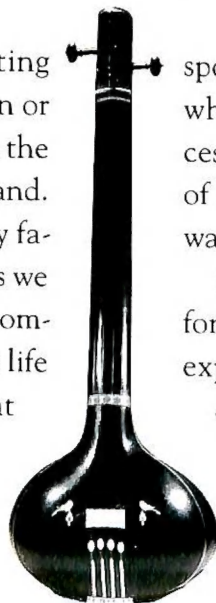
by Duncan Soule



Playing tablas during chanting. Photo by Patricia Slote.

*Chanting stabilizes the mind and breath, fosters an awareness of the flow between the chakras, and brings us to an experience of Oneness.*

**I** had my first experience with chanting before I began to practice meditation or yoga. It was while I was in college in the early 70s, playing guitar and singing in a jug band. One song we stumbled across that became my favorite was a simple American Indian chant. As we got used to playing it, I found I could get completely immersed in the song. The music had a life and momentum of its own. When singing that chant, I felt relaxed and freed from my usual concerns. I was not a particularly happy person during that period of my life, but I looked forward to that song because of the



spontaneous joy that would emerge within me whenever we sang it. I didn't understand the process, but I recognized that in the simple repetition of a few lines, something very special and magical was taking place.

Recently, I met with friends from the Institute for a weekend chanting program that allowed us to explore the principles and practice of chanting in depth. After an afternoon that focused on such technical and mundane questions as what were the appropriate keys and whether to sing in unison or call-and-response, we sat down together to practice "Om Namah Shivayah."

From a talk given at the May 21-22, 1988 Retreat in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Duncan Soule has contributed his musical skills as composer and performer to both the Institute's chanting program and hatha yoga audio tape series.



During the chanting, something extraordinary happened. It started with a pleasant sensation of lightness and vibration through my body that washed out tension and fatigue. I heard the sound of joyful laughter and voices speaking in some foreign language. This was interesting, as everyone I could see was simply chanting. I was filled with awe and a deep feeling of joy. As the chant drew to a close, there was a rich silence that filled the room and lasted for several minutes. We had all been affected similarly: the chanting had brought us to a spontaneous meditative state.

Over fifteen years lie between these two experiences, and I am better equipped to understand that mysterious process today. Chanting is a vital part of our practice at the Nityananda Institute. It serves as an important tool to prepare us for meditation.

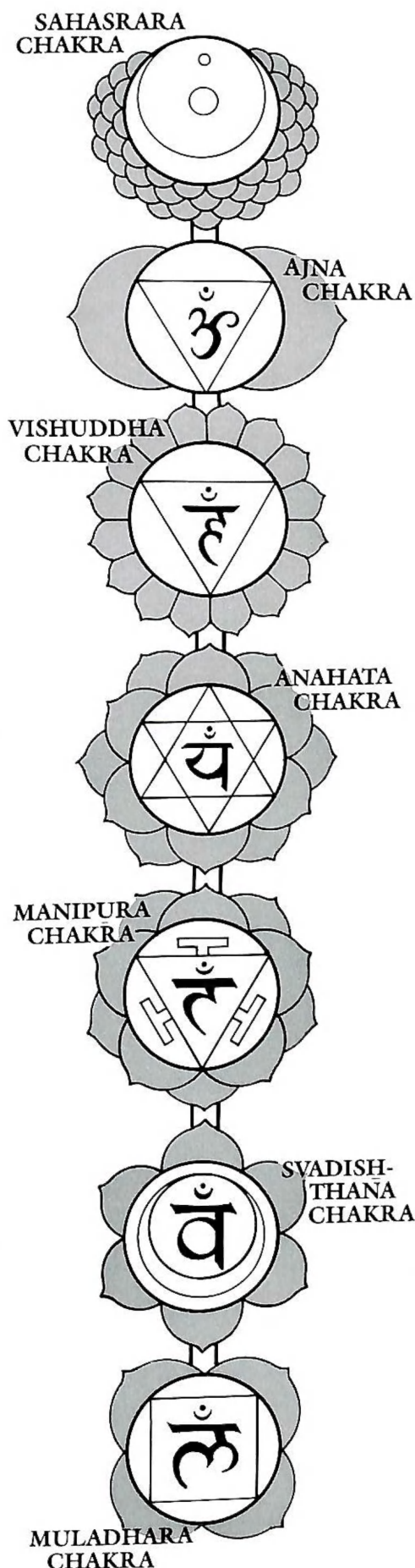
### How Does Chanting Lead to Meditation?

As we chant, a process occurs which brings about a condition of stability, an awareness of resonance, and finally, an experience of Oneness. Let's look at this process more closely.

First, chanting brings stability to body, breath, mind, and emotions. As we begin to chant, our body relaxes and we begin to get quiet inside. After a few minutes, the body stops being a distraction. Next, our breath is subtly regulated by the even phrasing of the chant. Our breath starts to flow smoothly and without restriction. This is a kind of *pranayama*, or breathing practice, that happens spontaneously in chanting.

The activity of the breath is also closely related to the activity of the mind. When we are agitated, the breath is shallow and restricted. When we are calm, the breath flows smoothly. This influence works in both directions, so that when we stabilize the breath, the mind naturally quiets as well. Stability of the mind is enhanced by focusing on the words and melody of the chant.

In the same manner, chanting can have a profound effect on our emotional state. By giving us a point of focus, chanting allows us to relax and release the tensions which contribute to our turbulent emotions. Further, the devotional quality of chanting also very naturally calms and stabilizes the emotions.



This power to stabilize has been borne out in my own experience. I recall the experience of driving to an important medical school interview feeling quite agitated and out of sorts. Not knowing what else to do, I finally began chanting and found that I slowly regained control of my breathing, my mind stopped running in circles, and my emotions settled down. When I reached the interview, I was ready and able to approach the situation with some detachment and openness.

### Chanting and Our Inner Awareness

In addition to its role as a stabilizer, chanting is a discipline that helps develop our inner awareness. It guides us to an awareness of resonance in the chakra system. To quote Swamiji:

Chanting balances and brings into harmony the rhythms of the body and the mind. By directing our attention to the various chakras during chanting, we are harmonizing our body and our mind with the chakras and the chakras with each other, so that the whole mechanism is open and flowing. This allows a simple, pure awareness of that vital consciousness that is our core to emerge.

To develop this idea, I'd like to review a few concepts from the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. The practice of chanting and the study of sound were important areas of investigation for the ancient sages of India. In Shaivism, the fundamental ground of reality is pure consciousness, pure awareness. This awareness is not inert, but permeated with vitality. The nature of consciousness is pulsation. This pulsation is not exactly movement, but rather a subtle throb which is called *spanda*.

Shaivite philosophy describes in detail the nature of *spanda* and the process by which pure vibration is transformed into the material universe. A simple way to visualize this process is that the initial vibration or *spanda* interacts with itself, like waves in a pool, and in doing so gives rise to other vibrations. They in turn interact and form a resonance, which creates both substance and form.

Further, Kashmir Shaivism states that the material universe is never separate from that pure, initial vibration. This



notion has been substantiated by modern scientists who have found that the fundamental units of matter are not really solid, but have wave-like properties. These "particles" are in essence vibration. So with our modern instruments, we have verified what was discovered by the Shaivite scholars many centuries ago.

It is vibration, pulsation, that creates the appearance of solid objects. Imagine an airplane propeller at rest. You see that it consists of separate blades spaced widely apart, radiating from a central point. But when the engine starts and the propeller begins to spin, it has the appearance of a solid disk — you no longer see separate blades. And if you tried to push a stick through the propeller, you would find the propeller *behaves* as a solid object as well. The movement, the pulsation, of the blades creates the appearance and the behavior of a solid disk. In a similar way, spanda or vibration creates the universe.

The same principle applies to our own structure. Human beings are also fundamentally made up of vibrations. The ancient Indian sages studied this carefully and discerned certain foundational vibrations which are expressed as the Sanskrit alphabet, in which each letter represents a particular vibration. This is why the Sanskrit language is so well suited for chanting. These foundational vibrations interact and form centers of resonance which are called chakras. There are seven major chakras, and each has its own unique resonance. They reflect the levels of vibration within each of us, from the grossest to the most refined, from the base of the spine to the top of the head.

Within each chakra exists a seed sound called a *bija*. By chanting the bijas and observing their resonance in the chakras, we can gain insight into our fundamental nature as vibration.

As an example, try repeating the syl-

lable "lam" while focusing your attention on the chakra at the base of the spine. Place emphasis on the initial "l" sound as you chant this bija. The bija for the heart chakra is "yam." Try repeating "yam" while you focus on the heart. You may notice that it has a lighter and more refined quality than the first bija. The bija for the chakra at the crown of the head (sahasrara chakra) is composed of all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet; its sound is unspoken. It is the unstruck sound, called the "om" sound, a sound

ness. We have access to the experience of the Self.

Swamiji has often discussed the progression of awareness in meditation as moving from breath to chakras to flow to Presence. The practice of chanting has a similar progression: first we stabilize the breath, then we become aware of the chakras and of the resonance in the chakras. Next, we feel a flow, and finally we experience the One Presence.

With all this in mind, as you chant, try to feel a joyful and devotional quality inside. Release tensions and feel the vibration, the resonance of the chant, in each of the chakras. You may feel your body being played like a musical instrument. This is wonderful. Just let it happen. Try to feel the source of vibration within you and become one with that source.

Chanting is not strictly a musical experience. It is different from singing in a choir. You don't need to be shy or worry if you don't have a great singing voice. You need not be in perfect tune or exactly in time with the music. Chanting is more than singing; it is a wonderful practice that uplifts us and opens the door to the meditative experience.

Swamiji once said about chanting that "By developing our awareness of the subtle pulsation, our participation in the essential intimate unity of all of life is revealed to us in a very tangible, palpable way." Chanting has been practiced by many different

cultures over many centuries. This rich tradition is grounded in the fact that it has the power to open our hearts, calm our minds, and release us from our ordinary worldly concerns. Chanting provides a means to discover our own infinite creative resource in a simple, practical way. It serves as a bridge between our philosophical understanding and our experience of meditation. Finally, it is a powerful tool that leads us to an experience of immersion in the creative flow of Life Itself. ■



PHOTO BY PATTY SLOTE

you can hear when you sit quietly.

As we chant, we hear our own voice in a chorus of voices, and we recognize the unity of the sound. We feel the vibration within us and all around us. It's a tangible experience of the unity of the inner and outer worlds. As we become attuned to the resonance in the chakras, we begin to feel the flow of creative energy within us. Through continued focusing and relaxing, this flow becomes stronger and our body and mind are no longer at the forefront of our aware-



# “WHY AM I HERE?”

THIS QUESTION PROMPTS A STUDENT TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE ON THE WHOLE OF HER LIFE.

BY MELANIE RUBIN



ON OCTOBER 11, 1985, I boarded an Amtrak train in South Station, Boston, bound for New York. I recall the date with such precision because it was two days before my mother's wedding, the destination of my journey. As I stood in the doorway of the non-smoking car, I remember thinking clearly, "Today I will sit next to someone that I *really* want to sit with." Walking down the aisle, I spotted a quiet woman with fair skin and short brown hair. "That's the person!" I thought to myself.

The woman was Nanette Redmond, a fifteen-year resident of the Nityananda Institute. After the first "hello," we talked for three hours straight, with each of us protesting periodically that we needed to work, trying for a minute or so, and then starting to talk again. Oddly enough, I have almost no recollection of the conversation except that Nan told me a little bit about the Institute where she lived and about her meditation practice. That train ride was the beginning of my involvement at the Nityananda Institute.

About two weeks later I came to my first Sunday program at the Institute. I had been interested in trying some kind of meditation for a couple of years, mostly as a form of stress management. I wasn't particularly looking for a spiritual practice, just a way to quiet my overactive brain and calm my too-frequently jangled nerves.

Melanie Rubin has been a resident of the Nityananda Institute since January, 1987. She is currently working in video production for Continental Cablevision in Cambridge, MA.



I have no specific memory of that first Sunday or my first impressions of Swami. Maybe it was just too much new input all at once and so the specifics have melded into a blur. I only know that I came back for another Sunday program within a couple of weeks and began to show up every week after that.

I do remember some general thoughts and feelings from that early time. I found many of the things Swami said to be tremendously insightful and useful. Beyond this, I was touched by his gentleness and fascinated by his skill in relating to so many people at once. I enjoyed the informality of the program and appreciated the lack of dogma which Swami's answers seemed to represent.

The quality of the Institute members was also striking. Taken as a group they seemed unusually bright, happy, interested, and interesting. They also appeared to be fairly diverse in terms of background and profession.

On the flip side of these positive impressions were all my fears and confusions. Who was this person anyway, and why was he called "Swami"? Why were all these perfectly capable adults sitting at his feet and asking him for answers? What was all this talk of chemistries changing and opening one's heart and God within each one of us?

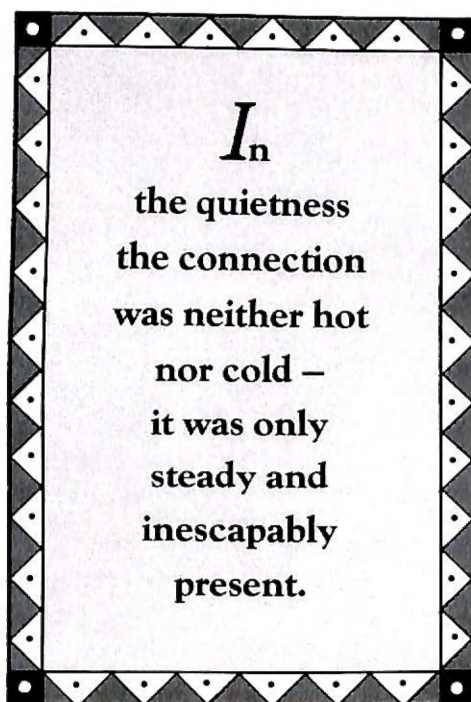
My mind was a-whirl with questions, one or two of which I would ask Swami every week. Sometimes his response would throw me into a new turmoil. But the answers were always careful and thought provoking. My difficulty was simply that all the answers in the world could not have settled the clouds of agitation in my brain. The situation and the concepts seemed at the same time totally foreign and completely natural. When I thought about leaving or tried to figure out why I kept coming to the programs, I could only admit that there was some indescribable something there that kept pulling me back.

At the end of November, I took an introductory meditation class and began to practice on a regular basis. It was rough going in the beginning. I had absolutely no idea what I should be doing or feeling. When I would sit to meditate, thoughts would ricochet around my brain endlessly. My legs would fall asleep and I would open my eyes after fifteen minutes thinking I had been sitting at least half an hour. I tried not to get

frustrated, but I was unable to imagine how I could ever, under any circumstances and even with a great deal of practice, learn to quiet my mind.

Nanette tried to reassure me: "If you sit every day and focus your attention on quieting your mind, sooner or later your brain will get the idea. It's just like anything else that takes practice."

Through all this I continued to come to the Sunday programs. Swami's insight frequently seemed to verge on clairvoyance, and soon it was for the utility of these insights alone that I looked forward to the program as the high point of my weekly routine.



I remember one incident very clearly. I was just about to start a challenging new job, and I sat at the back of the room feeling very anxious about it. A woman I didn't know asked Swami a question, and as he answered her I remember suddenly thinking to myself, "Oh my God, this relates directly to me!" Just at that moment he turned and looked right at me across the crowded room. "Do you understand what I mean, Melanie?" I felt as if I'd been shot through with an arrow. It was all I could do to nod and stay seated instead of rushing out of the room.

Soon afterwards I began to come to meditation classes with Swami two or three times a week. No two classes were ever the same, yet the differences were indescribable. The only thing I

could get a grip on was that it was extremely intense.

By now my family and friends really wanted to know what I was getting myself into. Their skepticism gave form to my internal struggle as the question "Why am I here?" I understood their concern but found it impossible to come up with much by way of explanation that would make any sense to them. The experience was outside the realm of simple rationality, and it seemed to me that Swami's teaching was able to penetrate only in spite of my intellect and all its questions. In the final analysis, I knew only that there was *something* powerful drawing me back again and again.

As I struggled through the early months of class, I found myself subject to many passing traumas. I remember one evening when I entered class absolutely furious with the whole situation, and particularly with Swami. I was in a "prove-yourself-to-me" mode, and I plunked myself down near the front of the room determined to stare down this imposter (posing as what? I didn't even know) who was disrupting my life. When he sat down I proceeded to glare at him, thinking, "Who do you think you are? Who *are* you, anyway?"

Eventually Swami turned and met me head on. In the quietness the connection was neither hot nor cold – it was only steady and inescapably present. He seemed to take in all my silent screaming, wordlessly and without moving. By the end of class, I found that my anger had somehow disappeared, evaporated like steam off a hot spring in the sunrise of a winter morning.

Throughout those months, the endless questions continued to pop up in my brain like ducks in a shooting gallery. At the close of a disquieting week of cerebral hysteria, I remember saying to Swami during a Sunday program, "My brain feels like it is exploding with questions. I feel as if I need to go away for a while." Swami chuckled and answered with a touch of irony in his voice, "Well, you can try that." I left that morning, determined to stay away for a week. But by Tuesday night I was champing at the bit to get back to class, and I somewhat sheepishly "postponed" my leave of absence. I didn't understand why I wanted to come to class – I only knew there was no other place I'd rather be.



The following September I began a graduate program in architecture. I was quickly overwhelmed by the tremendous amount of information I was required to assimilate and the skills I would need to develop. I experienced this pressure like a powerful centrifugal force, pushing me farther and farther away from a still point in the center. And in this center, I imagined, was meditation, the Institute, and Swami.

For months I fumed in frustration over my time pressures and inadequate connection. Saturday night classes with Swami became even more precious, because I had architecture classes on the other nights of the week that he taught. By the beginning of winter, with the onset of finals, I began to feel an even stronger desire for regular contact.

My forced absence had made me realize in a new way why the Institute had such a pull on me. This community, focused on growth through meditation, was not just a place where I went to go to classes or to meet my friends; the environment itself was a tremendous reservoir of energy and a source of support.

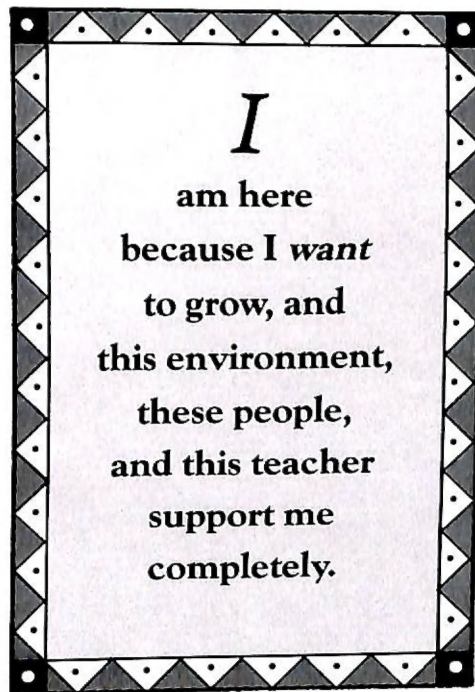
Finally, after lengthy deliberations about why I wanted to live in the Institute and a long soul-searching letter to Swami, I asked to move in.

To my chagrin, the spring semester was, if anything, harder than the fall had been. I would go for several days at a stretch with very little sleep and show up for meditation class feeling like a visitor from outer space. There was almost no time to get to know my housemates and, in fact, insufficient time to participate in the Institute programs in the way that I wanted to.

Despite my feelings of disconnection during this period, Swami's wisdom and the values expressed within the Institute continued creeping into my life and my relationships with the people around me. On one occasion, for instance, I was working late into the night with two schoolmates on a design competition that was due the next day. About 12 a.m., my brain began staging a noisy rebellion. Why were we doing this? The competition was not obligatory; we would be competing with students far more experienced; we had been arguing about the design approach for days, so how could the design we'd settled on in the eleventh hour possibly be any good? Would it really make any

difference at this point if I just went home? Finally my brain flashed one useful message in the midst of all the static: "How would Swami tell me to act in this situation?" The answer came just as clearly: "Do your work, and do it to the highest level of quality you can. Expressing love and respect means serving the people you work with to the best of your ability."

With this planted at the front of my mind, I dug in my heels to get something done. I finished a supporting drawing, and set down our ideas on the design as clearly as I could in a few numbered points. This was the final



touch on our presentation boards that would probably never get done if I didn't do it that night.

Miraculously, we tied for first place in the design competition. It was not because of my work that night, but it was helped by it. Perhaps less miraculously, I found that I had learned much more than I had bargained for.

It is impossible to write about why I am here without saying a word about my relationship with Swamiji, although to say much more than a word would plunge me into a separate article. As I have come to trust this environment, this meditation practice, and most of all this teacher, there have been points of resistance when I felt I might "flake out" and leave in a flurry of unquelled anxiety. Swamiji has always been there

with a word or a look to set things back on course when I really needed it.

For example, once during my second semester in architecture school, I'd really extended myself too far with special projects, and I felt like I was traversing some kind of internal minefield every time I sat to meditate. I wrote a note to Swami indicating my general feeling-on-the-brink/something's-gotta-go condition. When we met in the kitchen a couple of days later, he asked how I was doing. "Well, to tell you the truth, I'm still feeling a little crazy," I answered, wishing I had something more positive to offer him in that moment. "That's okay," he said, giving me a hug, "you're allowed to feel a little crazy sometimes." Something inside me released, as if my brain had finally gotten the message: "Phew! I can relax. It's only craziness and it will go away."

This attunement to the input I really needed from him (and not what I might have thought I needed) has been there since I first began to come regularly to the Institute.

With the passage of time I'm beginning to see how the discrete bits of Swami's teaching make up a broader perspective. One aspect focuses on lightness and humor combined with the intensity of hard work. Another is a consciousness of energy flow on many different levels – whether on a physical level within the body or on a non-physical level, in interactions between people. All of these elements fit together in pursuit of one overriding, all-consuming desire: the wish to grow.

Slowly, slowly this way of understanding life penetrates my daily activities. I am here because I *want* to grow, and this environment, these people, and this teacher support me completely.

But finally, there still remains that element of my reason which, by its nature, can never be fully explained. There are moments when I sit in class with Swamiji that I feel a happiness more complete than any I have ever experienced before in my life. In these moments I think that what I have felt is the closeness of that "indescribable something" which has drawn me back again and again since my first Sunday program. It is my effort to get closer to this indescribable awareness and understanding that is the fundamental reason that I am here. ■



Dearhearts, love is here  
where is your desire?

Rapt in anguished wishes  
searching to find reason  
Reflections glimmering  
long in twilight contemplation.

Mellifluous voices  
rising-up, up  
murmuring, murmuring  
searching for the pristine  
given voice.

— Laura Santi —

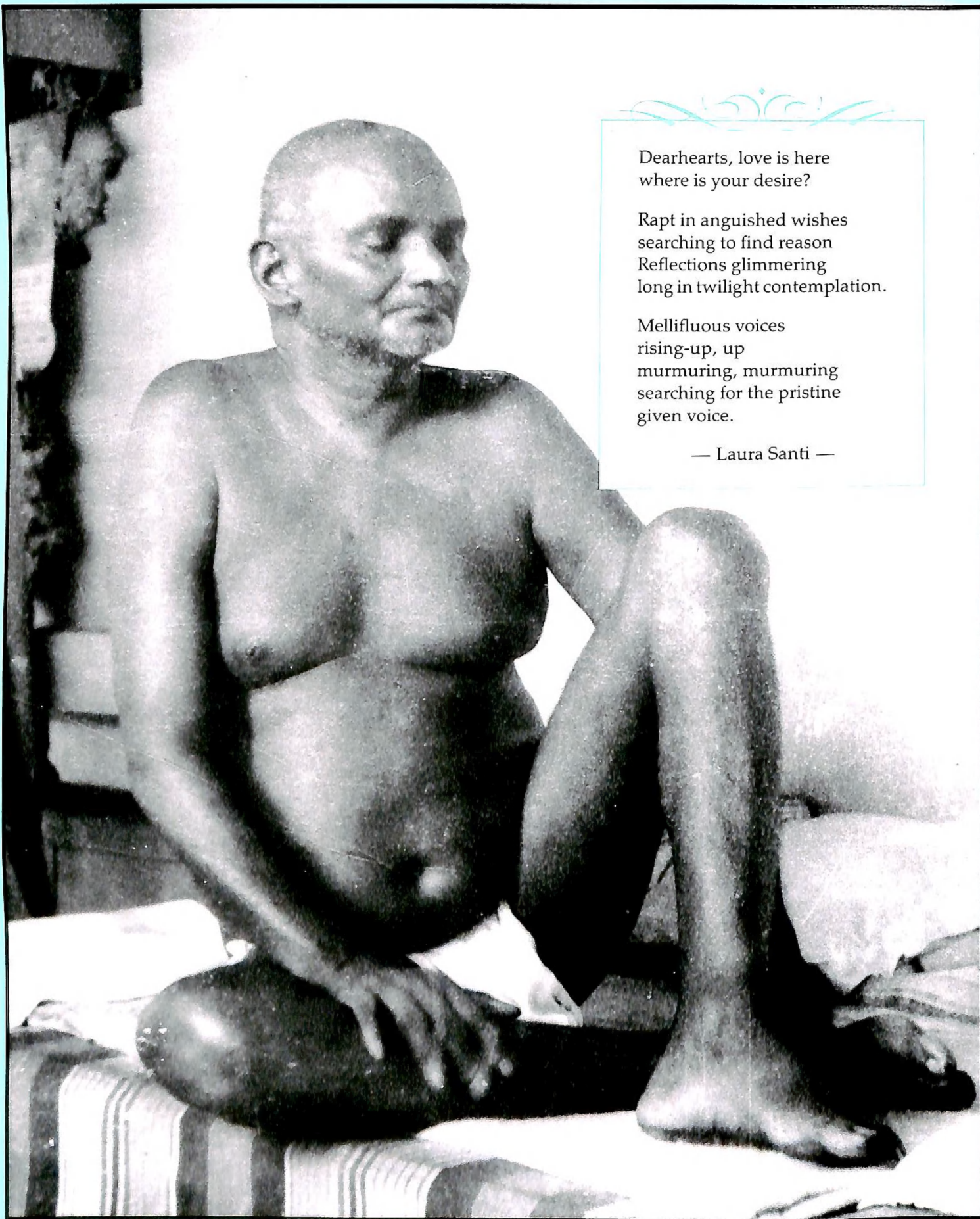


PHOTO BY M.D. SURVARNA



What can I say, Beloved?  
When I open my mouth  
I begin to forget you.

Whose words are these?  
I'm listening too hard to tell.  
I catch a bit, set it down,  
and then run on — anxious.  
Have I missed something?

Just one sound  
but too many words  
— and time.

The heart opens everywhere,  
the mind only travels —  
here and there.  
Music slows or moves too fast;  
the dancing may  
appear to stop.  
It's easy to get lost  
looking back,  
absorbed in difference.

Don't let me use words  
to keep you at a distance —  
embracing Love but not  
the Friend.  
Let's breathe and join  
like voices on a single note.  
And if you want,  
let the words rush out —  
but keep me with you  
in the joy behind them.

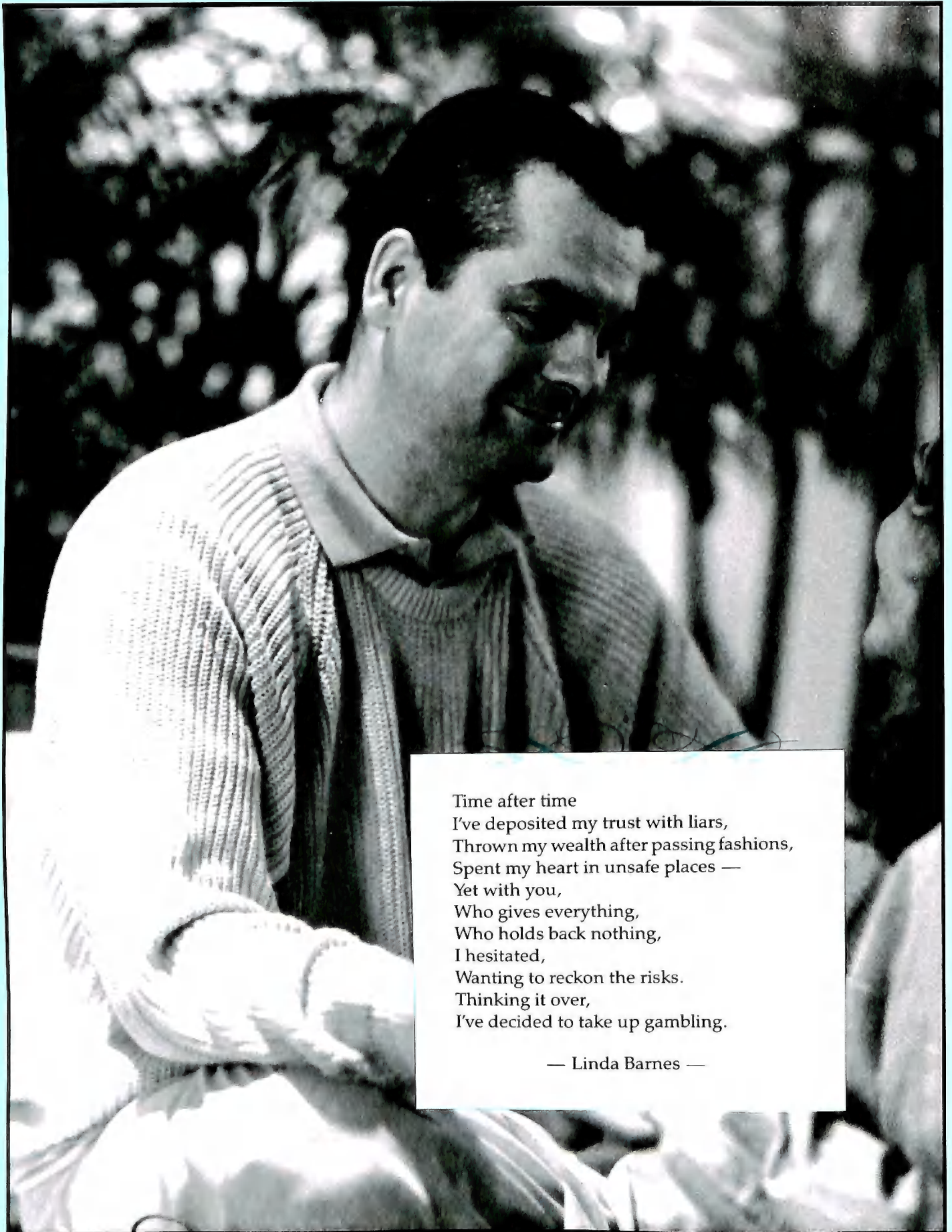
Look:  
words can be like  
garments that bind  
so hold my eyes —  
don't let me turn to watch  
when they fall away.

And when I speak —  
let others reap  
the harvest in my heart.

— Connie Dyer —



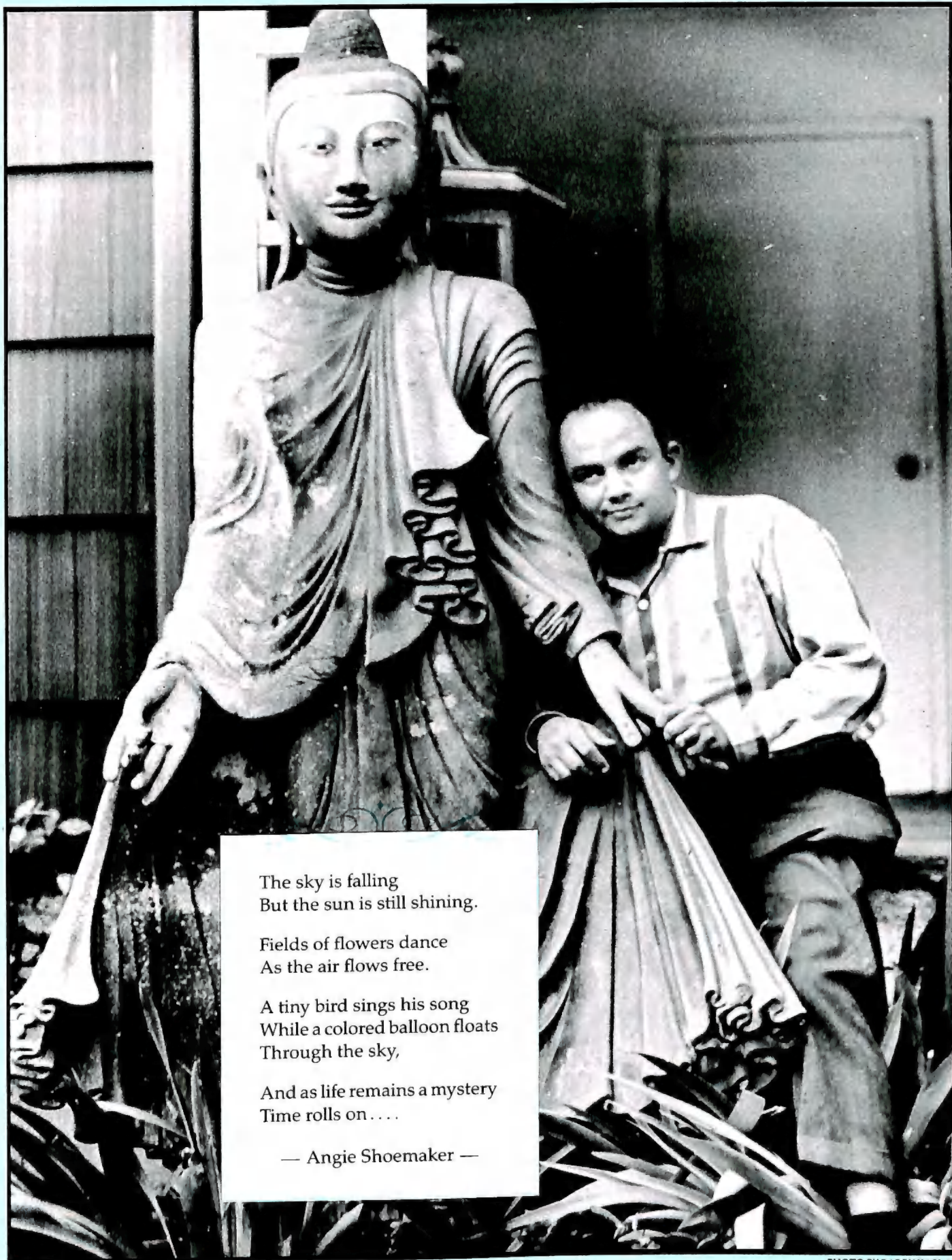




Time after time  
 I've deposited my trust with liars,  
 Thrown my wealth after passing fashions,  
 Spent my heart in unsafe places —  
 Yet with you,  
 Who gives everything,  
 Who holds back nothing,  
 I hesitated,  
 Wanting to reckon the risks.  
 Thinking it over,  
 I've decided to take up gambling.

— Linda Barnes —





The sky is falling  
But the sun is still shining.

Fields of flowers dance  
As the air flows free.

A tiny bird sings his song  
While a colored balloon floats  
Through the sky,

And as life remains a mystery  
Time rolls on . . .

— Angie Shoemaker —



# Instead of Reaching Out, Reach In

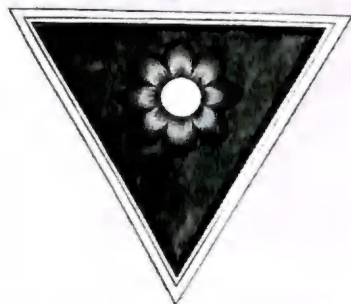
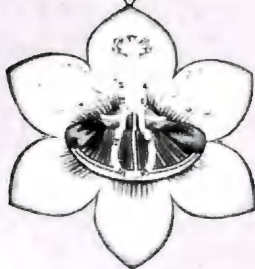
Swami Chetanananda

*Through the inner work of  
releasing tensions and allowing  
the creative energy to flow,  
we come to understand that  
our own individual  
consciousness is infinite*

**T**he fundamental spiritual question is: "Is there something greater than us? And if there is, where is it? What is it?" In other words, "What is God?" The earliest attempts human beings made to answer this question and to solidify a harmonious relationship with their environment were all basically dualistic. The universe broke into two parts: us and them – gods or spirits or ancestors or something. These dualistic attitudes gave rise to rituals, and in time, ritualists took over and the religion business really got going. In the Indian traditions, and also in the Judeo-Christian traditions, the priests took over and squeezed the people for money and for power. Ultimately they so oppressed their constituencies that they were thrown out. In India, the advent of the Buddha and his rejection of ritualism signaled the beginning of this process on a large scale.



Buddhist philosophy and spiritual practice were based on the thought that the essence of everything is actually nothing – empty. And this notion of emptiness occupied center stage in India for some six hundred years. And even though for a long time there was some dis-





sent to that view (Shaivism existed at the same time and participated in this discussion), it was only later on that the balance strongly shifted to the examination of the ideas of Vedanta



and Shankara, who said that the essence of everything is not nothing, it is something, but that something is stillness – an absolutely passive awareness. It has no motion and no change. So somebody asked the unpleasant question: "Well if that's true, then what are we?" And Vedanta's response was, "We are Maya." But if there's only one thing and it's changeless and inert, then where does Maya come from? The Vedantists did not have a simple, clear response to this question, although they did have a long-winded justification.

Out of this discussion Shaivism emerged in Kashmir in about the eighth century A.D. when the Vedantists were also becoming popular. Trika philosophy is the inner point of Kashmir Shaivism, and the highest refinement of it. And this Trika philosophy says, basically, "Yes, there is something higher than us. And that something higher than us is everything. The something higher than us is conscious energy – which is nothing but our own essence." Further, the sages and saints of Shaivism said, "We will not accept any belief in God that we cannot directly experience ourselves." Carrying on their meditations, they looked inside. And the first thing that they encountered was a kind of emptiness. This is the basis of the Buddhist concept of void. But Shaivism said, "Wait a second. Clearly this is not nothing. Also clearly it is not an illusion. There is really something happening here." So in examining carefully the nature of their own essence, they came to the understanding that we are conscious energy – pure awareness that permeates both inside and outside. We are aware of ourselves, and we are also aware of the world. That awareness of the world is called *prakasha*, and our awareness of ourselves is called *vimarshi*. Consciousness is one thing with two aspects – active and passive, or dynamic and still.

These careful philosophers looked within themselves and they under-

stood that everything is one thing. That's not so difficult for us to grasp today: we have highly advanced technology and some brilliant people who point out to us that matter and energy are interchangeable. Time and space are related to one another, and there is at least a possibility of a consistency, a unity, within all the forces that function in the material universe. Even though it has not been specifically proven, there is a continuing intuition on the part of great scientists that there is such a unity in nature and in our lives as well. This continuing intuition is very interesting; it is historically all-pervasive – perhaps because it is so.

By examining their own inner experience, the Shaivites discovered that

**Growing  
happens when we  
take our attention  
inside and release  
the tensions  
and allow  
our own creative  
energy to flow.**

this universal spirit (or God) is one. It is transcendent. It is everywhere and always at once, and that also means here and now, immanent. Right now. That spirit is the growth to which we aspire and it is also the personal, deep, intimate feeling that compels us to look. It is immanent and transcendent. But it is never personal. The notion of a personal God is immature. God simply is. This absolute, pure, conscious creative energy simply is. It is a source of your life and my life.

The essential, two-fold characteristic of this conscious energy is freedom and joy. If this creative energy isn't free, then it also isn't God. It is completely free, and also continuously full. When we feel our own heart open we feel that fullness.

The experience of this one thing puts an end to every kind of duality, and this is really what we need. It's not an intellectual idea that I want you to cultivate, although I think it's necessary for you to examine your experience, to observe it and try to develop some understanding of it. But basically, this is not a belief system; this should be your experience. This is not a philosophy or religion which is in any way going to limit you. It is quite the contrary. It is an experience – and an understanding that emerges from continuous contact with that experience – that should really release you. This understanding is not like a burden that you have to carry around in any way. It should allow you to put down all your burdens.

God is consciousness, consciousness is God. It's so simple and extraordinary. Everything that we experience, we experience because of consciousness. Everything we know and see and touch and feel is only because of consciousness. There is nothing that we experience that is outside consciousness. It's not possible. Consciousness is the highest.

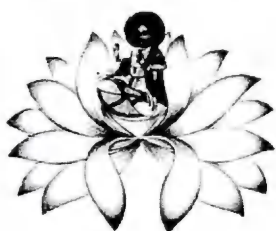
Further, this consciousness is not inert. Even a rock responds to its environment, albeit profoundly slowly: the forces both within that rock and within its environment are constantly, slowly, pulsating and changing. This movement within and without is in fact the essence of consciousness. Without movement there is no consciousness. There's nothing. There is only inertia, only emptiness, nothing. Do you notice anything if there's no movement? Consciousness is dynamic, it is not nothing. It is constantly pulsating with both expansion and reflection. That activity is manifest in all the forms of matter, from the simplest to the most complex, from subatomic particles to galaxies. This pulsation, interacting with itself, gives rise to the world.

Now, let's go back to our own experience, our own consciousness. First,





notice that in any interaction, there's a constant shift in your focus. First you relate to yourself (inside), then you relate to the person or situation in front



of you (outside), you relate inside, you relate outside. It is constant. You don't have to think about it, this is just naturally what takes place. Also, this pulsation is happening in all of us at the same time. Each one of us is a center of that pulsation. Consciousness itself is indivisible, it is one; it is infinite and unbounded.

We ourselves are nothing but an individualization of the highest consciousness. When it is said that man is made in the image and likeness of God, it is very simple. God is pure consciousness and every human being is an individualized manifestation of that consciousness. Each human being is endowed with the same infinite potentiality from which this whole universe has come forth.

This is not something we can understand very easily, although it is actually quite simple. Somehow, because of our conditioning and because of the various forms of crystallization that set themselves up inside us, we get locked. We get stuck because this crystallization of energy or consciousness forms a body and we identify with that body. But even though we have this body and we call it "I," most people have no understanding about what it is.

Basically, our body is nothing but a colony of cells, amazingly like all the other colonies of cells that exist upon this planet. All living things have cellular structure, and we ourselves are very sophisticated colonies of cells.

I was watching a nature show on television one night about the cuttlefish. This is a fascinating creature that has the capacity to completely change its surface coloring and markings in order to respond to the particular opportunity that it perceives. It can look one way to attract a mate and completely differently to attract food. On the show, the cuttlefish saw a shrimp swimming along and in a flash, it changed, wiggled, and the shrimp came over to check it out.

What happened? Kawhomp! That shrimp was gone to shrimp heaven. This is so much like us. Even though we are multi-faceted dynamic events, most of the time we are only responding to the surface, to the most gross and crude pressures that exist within our biological field: we are looking for opportunities to eat and reproduce.

We take on a particular personality, in the same way that a cuttlefish takes on a particular set of spots and shades of color, based on the strategy we imagine will succeed for us in the biological realm. In taking that identity upon ourselves, we are limiting our horizons; most of the choices people go through life making are only a process of continuously limiting and reducing the opportunities that we have for choice.

Simply  
be aware.  
It is that  
simple.

The processes of biology become the purpose of our life. Suddenly, we are in this world simply to survive, by eating and reproducing. While we may tell ourselves that we have very lofty purposes and principles, we are really only finding ever more sophisticated ways to eat and reproduce. This whole life becomes just reaching out and taking in, reaching out and taking in, reaching out and taking in. All of us in one way or another are involved in what we call the struggle to get ahead, and yet, looked at from a certain perspective, each of us is expressing nothing more than a variation in the fundamental vibration in this colony of cells.

One consistent feature of this basic process is that this reaching out and taking in always has some experience of lack in it. Even though we are constantly reaching out and taking in, in those moments when we stop and reflect, something inside us says, "There must be more to life than this." I don't care who you are or where you are or

when you lived, it's consistent. Mystical poetry from every culture and time all begins from the same fundamental departure point: the emptiness of ordinary life, the lack that we feel, and the need to go further than our ordinary life to find some kind of substance.

This situation, where we are living within our biological identity, responding to opportunities to eat and reproduce, and existing in a realm of time and space and linear behavior, is classically called *karma*. When our biological impulses become the horizon of our life, this is karma. What it basically means is that whatever you assert from within yourself, whatever energy you extend from within yourself, takes on a life of its own. It becomes a pattern we endlessly repeat. In this way we take on many limitations, and we experience much suffering and unhappiness and misfortune, and then we say, "Oh, it's my karma."

Actually, there is only such a thing as karma for human beings because of our own misunderstanding. We are individual manifestations of the infinite consciousness. Karma, however, is living in the realm of cause and effect. But there is only such a thing as cause and effect in small mediums – in the narrow view. As we continuously reduce our horizons, our understanding of the power of choice that we have is continuously reduced. We are constantly responding from our misunderstanding about our own nature, thinking of ourselves solely as a body and a mind. We relate from this misunderstanding to the misperceptions that we have about the nature of the appearances that manifest before us, and so we are continuously struggling to capture and hold onto a misperception. And what we find is that it is all profoundly unsatisfying.

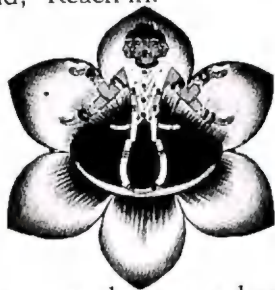


This whole external life has come forth from within us. As long as we don't understand that, we remain subject to



the realm of karma. Our actions will constantly spawn hundreds of unforeseen consequences, in the same way that the shrimp, responding to the cuttlefish, definitely met with an unforeseen consequence. The consequences of our efforts are often only marginally a reflection of our intention. A well-intended word provokes an argument, a good-intentioned act brings insult, a celebration of life in the form of marriage turns into tragedy.

Fortunately, all the great teachers across time, in every tradition, have said that there is more to life than the continuous struggle to attain things – more than the infinite unforeseen consequences of our reaching out and taking in. Instead of reaching out, they have said, “Reach in.”



Come to a deeper understanding about the fundamental power of your perception and the ground in which that perception arises. The infinite nature of individual consciousness is a manifestation of the same supreme power that has poured forth the whole universe. There is no need to identify with any process whatsoever. There is no need to think, “I am a carpenter,” or “I am a poor person,” or “I am a smart person,” or “I am a beautiful person.” All of these kinds of personalities that we attempt to cultivate represent fundamental misunderstandings about our own nature.

When we understand that we are nothing but infinite consciousness, then slowly we begin to experience a profound relaxation as we recognize the infinite treasure, the infinite power, that exists within us. We don’t have to reach out anymore, just as a flower doesn’t have to reach for anything. Its seed simply falls to the ground, draws what is there unto itself, and from that drawing manifests its creativity. We don’t need to work to breathe.

As a spiritual person, full of the understanding of our own awareness and potential, we should be endlessly choosing to expand our horizons. This is what growing is about. Unfortu-

nately most human beings come into this world and immediately take on some limited conditioning. Then we proceed to act out this limited conditioning in a way that continuously contracts our horizons. We call this contracted awareness our karma. And people who set their foot upon a path of worldly objectives and goals clearly engage this whole process of ever-diminishing opportunities for free expression. Our mind is constantly attempting to find the most beneficial course of action – which way to get the most and pay the least at the same time. But the reality is that in an infinity (and the infinity is our own consciousness), there is no possibility of more gain. You can’t get more than you pay for. It is impossible. You only get exactly what you choose, even when you are not aware of the unforeseen consequences. So everything becomes a struggle, everything seems difficult. The question of “What’s going to happen to me?” dominates.

This is the secret mantra of ordinary human beings: “What’s going to happen to me?” With that mantra in force, our horizons become ever narrower. We now identify circumstances not in terms of their long-range possibilities for expansion, but rather in terms of “How will I get what I think I want right now and avoid what I think I don’t want right now?” Suddenly we’re responding to our perceptions as opportunities for pleasure or the avoidance of pain. Our vision does not extend past the end of our nose. We are continuously haunted by and suffering from the agitation, anxiety, stress, strain, and struggle that all unforeseen consequences must bring out. And so another notch of contraction takes place.



Finally, in the ultimate contraction, when all of the stress and strain and disappointment constipate and crystallize you, you think that nothing can really happen for you. This isn’t exactly a thought, it’s more a feeling in your heart. It is a denial of your own worth, and slowly, over time, it extends itself into a denial of the worth of others and the worth of all your relationships and activities in the world.

It is inevitable – it is karma – that once you put your foot on such an outward path, you will become continually

more compressed. And in that compression, tensions and poisons build up within you which cause you physical unhealth, disturb the balance of your mind, and make you profoundly unhappy.



The good news is that all this time, nothing has particularly changed at all except for your own view. Your own nature is still infinite and nothing but pure consciousness. Your own creative potential is incredible and phenomenal and more than the mind as a mechanism is able to deal with.

When we are devoted to growing, the whole world shifts around. Growth does not happen outside us; growth takes place within us as the expansion of our understanding. It means taking responsibility for our own lives, being willing to work, starting to look carefully and to question our own understanding and motives, allowing our creative energy to flow through us. When we are established in the awareness of our own infinite nature and our absolute potentiality, then there is no way that our mind can become entangled in this creative flow. Our mind is quiet and still.

Have you ever been in a circumstance where you were facing a problem and seemed stuck, you didn’t know what to do, so you just stopped paying attention to it, and suddenly from nowhere some appropriate solution just sort of popped out at you? As we change our focus and begin to allow growth to happen inside us, and as the limitations in our horizons dissolve, the superficial boundaries of our awareness are released and the field of our experience is extended. This extension allows us to appreciate more and more the unity of ourself and all things.

At that stage there is nothing particular for us to want or reach out to. There is also nothing for us to be afraid of or to recoil from. Because we are established in the experience of our own absolute potential, we realize that nothing can really threaten us, and there is nothing that we need. We cannot take water from the ocean. If we go to the ocean with our bucket and take it away, we have not reduced the ocean at all, and if we go down to the beach and empty our bucket, we have not added anything to it. And so notions



like "I'm here to get something in my life" are the ravings of a deluded person. They are misperceptions, like mistaking a rope for a snake or the shadow of a puppet for a demon.

As human beings we become free from all karma when we take the step to turn our attention within and begin to allow our horizons to expand to the limit of the consciousness that we are. People who have undertaken this endeavor and devoted their lives to it have, without fail, all asserted the same truth: Consciousness is one. The creative potential is absolute and unlimited, and each human being has access to it. It's amazing and it's fabulous.

With this understanding, more and more you shed your cynicism, you forget your doubts, your fears drop away, your disappointments melt, your bad feelings about yourself dissolve. You think, "How could I have ever put myself in that position? How could I have imagined that was real?" This understanding happens as you are filled more and more with the joy that is inherent in your own infinite creative potential.

People have the mistaken idea in spirituality that they have to give things up. In fact, the only thing we can ever give up is our misunderstanding, because our own essential nature is infinite and powerful. And it is only when we give up our desires, our attachments, our misconceptions – when we release these tensions and allow our creative energy to flow – that we can really begin to realize our highest potential. When that potential is engaged and aroused and allowed to manifest within the field of our existence, our life is transformed completely.

Through surrender, through our ability to relax ourselves completely and to allow our creative energy to flow, we have not given up anything, we have only given up our illusion, and we become more.

Then every activity you engage in becomes a manifestation of the highest creative energy and is permeated with joy. There is no restriction. The only restriction is in your own understanding; when you become attached to various forms of experience, your understanding might contract again, and you may suffer. But when you allow this creative energy to flow in you, you become a bigger person and your life endlessly expands. You are in touch with your creative energy and filled with the

absolute joy that allows you to recognize that this creative potential within you is complete and extraordinary. It allows you to feel the extraordinary strength, joy, and sweetness of your participation in that divine state, just as you are.

Continuously your attention is focused inside, and you understand that where you are and where you are going are really one and the same thing: you are simply unfolding from within yourself and enjoying the fragrance and the fruit of that unfoldment. You are not seeking anything outside, because when you really do your inner work, when you release tensions and allow your creative energy to flow, then there is no outside. There is only inside and the endless potentiality for fulfillment. And because every human being is endowed with infinite power of self-expression and infinite capacity for free choice, the only issue is whether you will engage it.



I am very grateful to all of you for the opportunity that you allow me to participate in your life. I am equally grateful that you have the interest to participate in mine. What takes place between us is a very special thing that in this world is depressingly rare. Lots of people talk about it, but very few people do it. This experience cannot be described or encompassed by words in any way. It is a simple and pure, heart-to-heart experience that releases tension, transforms each of us, and allows that deepest inner creative capacity to unfold and reveal its true nature to our mind. That is the substance of our experience together. And if in some simple way our loving can change the world, it is not because we will build great models or build great cities or build anything. It is not because we will do anything anywhere outside ourselves. It is because we will embrace the truth within ourselves and live continuously and steadfastly in the awareness of that truth, demonstrating that truth in our everyday, ordinary lives with the people we live with and say we love, day by day.

My hope for you is that you will be

able to turn your attention inside every day and release the miracle of life itself which is hidden within. If you do, there is an abundance in your life on every level.

This is the biggest gift I can give you: to tell you with great conviction that there is something fabulously wonderful within you that is yours right now. Like the seed of the wish-fulfilling tree in Buddhism, it is there inside you. You need do nothing but water it and cultivate it by living a simple, disciplined life and taking your attention inside. In so doing, very naturally as this tree grows, it will drop to you, in your ordinary life, the extraordinary fruits of its development. You need not wish for anything, you need not ask for anything.

Simply be aware. It is that simple.

The most fundamental demonstration of your caring for your own life is for you to do this simple thing: Go inside yourself, find the essence of life within, and spend a little time with that life every day. Growing is about making choices that continuously expand your horizons, continuously uplift you above the limitations of the apparent. Through growing you realize your absolutely highest potentiality.

Growing happens when we take our attention inside and release the tensions and allow our own creative energy to flow. On our breath we release the tensions in our body, in our mind, in our hearts, and become established in the very simple, pure, amazingly big, pulsation of Life Itself. When we do this, we realize that in each and every experience that unfolds before us there is some small (or sometimes great) treasure.

And we need do nothing. In fact, the more we try to do, the less we get. The more we struggle, the more tension we make, and the more we disturb the finest levels of the creative process that are trying to uplift us. An artist who is starving may work hard to paint pictures that somebody will buy. An artist who is free paints what flows from within, without concern about who likes it and who doesn't like it. The work then comes forth simply from love, inspiration, and the skill to express them.

Find that creative potential within yourself. Live with the awareness that in God, in the experience of your own essential nature, anything can be accomplished. That power is in you. Be aware of it. Be free. And be full. ■



# HOW TO SIT MORE COMFORTABLY

Understanding how the knee works will improve  
your ability to sit in meditation

BY DEBBIE CARPENTER THRALL

**Y**ou are standing in the entry to the meditation room. Should you try just one pillow today? Maybe one of those kneeling stools. Last week your knee was really bad – had to sit in a chair . . .

The knee is an interesting subject for many people because it is such an important link in the chain of movement in an active life and is so susceptible to injury. A common problem among people who sit “Indian style” for long periods at a time is a pain on the inside of the knee. There may be many causes for pain in this area, including previous injuries, an imbalance in the soft tissue structures that cross the knee joint, or poor alignment of the bones of the joint.

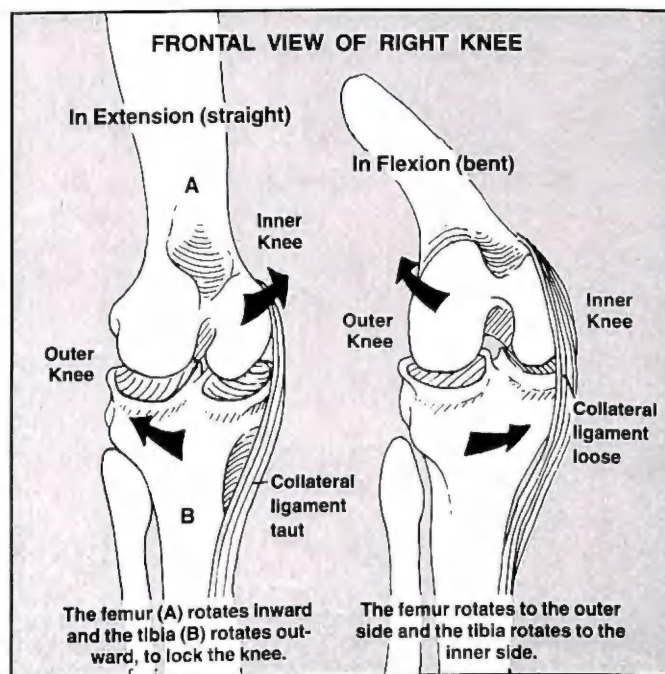
Fortunately, there are techniques in hatha yoga to help relieve knee pain for nearly any type of problem.

We can better understand what actually happens to the knee joint if we first define some of the terms pertaining to the knee and its function. The bone of the lower leg is the *tibia*, while the bone of the upper leg is the *femur*. *Flexion* describes the bent knee position; *extension* refers to the straightened leg. The joint acts primarily like a hinge, allowing the knee to flex and extend.

In addition to acting as a hinge, the bones of the joint rotate to form a lock

when we stand. When the knee is completely straight, the femur twists inward just a little to make a fit with the tibia that interlocks them for greater stability. This creates a structural support, putting less stress on the muscles and ligaments. When the knee unlocks, the joint once again acts like a hinge, until the last part of full flexion, as when sitting cross-legged.

In full flexion, the bones rotate opposite to the locking movement in standing. The best fit in flexion comes from an outward rotation of the thigh (femur) and an inward rotation of the calf (tibia).



Many things can be done to help prepare the knee for sitting. Bear in mind that most often it isn't the knee that needs to be stretched, but the hip. We have illustrated a few key poses to prepare the legs for sitting. It is important to lengthen the muscles at the front, back, and side of the thigh and hip.

Instructions for placing the ankle in the lotus are usually to grasp the ankle with both hands from underneath and roll the foot up onto the root of the thigh. Be careful with this movement, however, because this turns the tibia in the wrong direction. Once the foot and ankle are in place on the thigh, be sure to readjust the calf by pushing the muscle bulk

down and away from you.

When you are preparing for meditation, choose yoga poses to open the hip as well as to stretch out the lower back, open the chest, and loosen the neck. Try alternating the knee that is placed on top in order to keep a balance in the rotation of each hip. Finally, when you are ready to begin meditation and are seated, gently guide your hips and knee as follows: adjust the hips so you can sit firmly on the “sits bones,” lift the thigh from the inside to rotate the femur outward, and rotate the tibia inward by “stuffing” the calf in toward the floor. ■

Debbie Thrall has a degree in Physical Therapy. She has been a member of the Institute for nine years, and a hatha teacher for eight years.



## POSES TO PREPARE FOR SITTING



### UTTANASANA

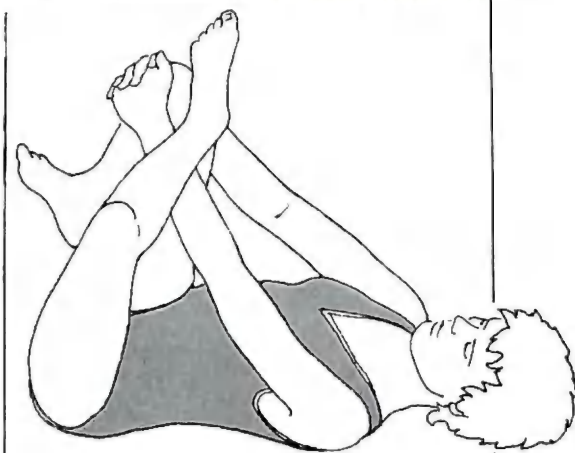
( a b o v e )

Begin standing in Tadasana, with the arms overhead, palms forward. First lift upward, then reach forward and down, bending at the hip. Place the fingertips or the palms on the floor beside the feet. If the hands don't reach the floor, the arms may be folded at the elbows. Release the lock in the knees if the stretch on the back of the legs is too much. The head and neck hang free as you breathe five or six deep breaths.

### LEG CRADLE

( b e l o w )

Sit in Dandasana. Bend the right knee and turn it out. Cradle the lower leg in your arms, clasping the fingers at the outside of the right leg. Move the thigh and calf back and forth in front of the body, feeling the rotation in the hip socket. Gently test the farthest extensions of the movement. Repeat for six breaths.



### THROUGH THE HOLE

( a b o v e )

Lie on your back with the knees bent. Bring the right ankle to rest on the left knee, letting the right knee turn out to the side. Thread the right hand through the space inside the right leg. Bring the left hand to the outside of the left knee and clasp hands over the left knee. As you exhale, draw the left thigh toward you. Release the pull as you breathe in. Repeat for six breaths with each leg.

### JANU SIRSASANA

( l e f t )

Sit in Dandasana. Bend the right knee and bring it out to the side as you roll the thigh outward. Turn to face the center of the outstretched left leg. Bend forward over the leg and reach for the toes, beginning the stretch by moving the pelvis. Hold for three breaths on each side.



# What You'd Miss Without RUDRA . . .

Have you thought recently about the great things that come to you in the pages of *Rudra*? Think of the features you've enjoyed the most:

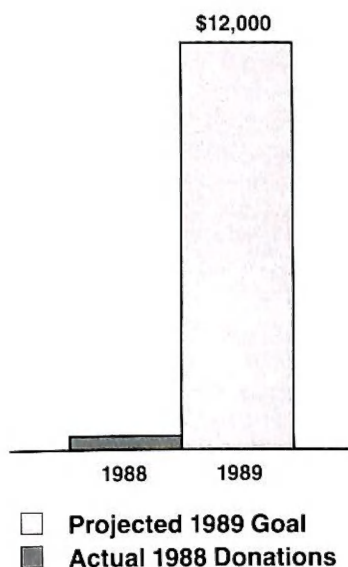
- Swami Chetanananda's latest teachings
- Articles that offer practical advice and insight on living a spiritual life
- Articles on ways to improve your health and well-being through diet, exercise, and stress management
- Information on classical texts and new books about spiritual philosophy and practice

## ■ We need your help.

This is all very valuable – and it comes to you FREE four times a year. But publication costs are high – about \$30,000 a year. The Institute covers costs now, but to do so, it must divert funds from other worthwhile programs and publishing projects.

## ■ What you can do to help Rudra:

We need to raise \$12,000 to cover our printing and mailing costs in 1989. The good news is: your single donation of \$25 or more would allow us to meet our goal, which means you keep getting the great features that you enjoy – and that you have come to expect.



## ■ Won't you help?

So isn't \$25 worth it to keep *Rudra* coming to you? As you can see from the chart, in 1988, less than 2% of *Rudra's* budget came from donations. Help us make 1989 a better year by sending in your donation today. In the next four issues of *Rudra*, we will show you our progress in this campaign. Let's fulfill our goal of \$12,000 Now!

## ■ Here's how you can help:

Call today and make a pledge: (617) 576-3394, ask for Aurelia at *Rudra*.

Send your check to:

Nityananda Institute/*Rudra*

P.O. Box 1973, Cambridge, MA 02238



ETHICAL BEHAVIOR CAN'T  
BE TAUGHT; IT REQUIRES  
THE DISCIPLINE OF  
AN INNER PRACTICE

**L**ast year, Harvard Business School was given a \$30 million endowment to start an ethics program. I am a student in the MBA program at the school, as well as being a student at the Institute. My experiences at the latter cause me to doubt the capacity of the B-school to teach ethics – or rather to foster ethical *behavior* in high pressure situations. The discipline and power of the teaching at the Institute, along with the insight into the subtleties of ethics that Swamiji provides, convince me that ethical behavior is not taught through discussion. Rather, it is the outcome of one's inner work. The following is taken from a paper I wrote on the subject for a course last spring.

Last week a prominent member of the administration at HBS commented privately something to the effect that “we don’t need an elaborate ethics program to discern that illegal insider trading is wrong. Any twelve-year-old can see that such activity is wrong. Our study of ethics needs to focus on the subtler issues of

Based on a paper published in the Harvard Business School Newsletter, Rachel Gaffney, a frequent contributor to *Rudra*, is a student in Harvard University's MBA program.



ethical dilemmas – issues where there are no clear lines of demarcation.”

I have quite a different view, however. My premise is that an executive will frequently be tempted by activities that are either blatantly illegal or “pushing the envelope.” I contend that very fine people find themselves in this position: that, for example, some of the Harvard grads indicted in the insider trading scandal did not have the equipment to wrestle with just this kind of ethical struggle. I don’t presume to address the subtler ethical issues that have been argued since the beginning of time. Rather, I’m talking about the straightforward temptation to cheat, and why even the best of men and women need training in how to face situations conducive to such. I’d prefer not to leave the judging of such behavior up to the twelve-year-olds, and I can’t dismiss these situations themselves as not worthy of the University’s attention.

Here’s my argument straight out: talking about ethics at HBS won’t make us ethical. I don’t make any of the following claims lightly, nor do I make them out of cynicism. They come from close observation of the discrepancy between our intentions and our behavior, and from two years of study of the nascent field of system dynamics – a field founded by Jay Forrester of M.I.T.

**1. You cannot teach ethics to students in their mid-twenties.** By “teach ethics” I mean to inculcate people with a sense of right and wrong. If people in their mid-twenties don’t already have a sense of ethics, no amount of discussion will instill it. This is particularly true of people successful enough to make it to HBS; clearly whatever has gotten them there is something they’ll stick to, ethical or no. It works.

**2. Talking about ethics in the classroom does nothing to make managers-to-be more ethical in their behavior.** An article from the April 1987 issue of the *HBS Bulletin* discusses the ambitions of the ethics program. After a long section about the difficulty posed by the complexity of the situations a manager might face today, the paper cites the mission as “to find reasonable and rigorous ways to talk about [ethical problems].” I infer from this that the director feels that talking about ethics is the best we can do to stimulate ethical behavior, since we

can’t figure out what’s right or wrong and make a set of rules to live by in these highly complex situations. Presumably the discussions will help us to become more ethically-minded – to be able to spot an ethics problem, to appreciate that others will feel differently about the problem, and to think carefully about the ramifications of any decisions we make.

Fair enough. There’s some truth to what he says (although it’s highly dependent on the teaching approach used). Perhaps we will become more ethically-minded. But so what? *Ethically-minded is very different from ethically behaved.* Talking about ethics will have next to no impact on making ethical managers out of us, not because the exercise is futile in itself, but because it has no bearing on how we will behave when we’re actually in the kind of high pressure situations where ethics come into play. Talking in the HBS classroom about right and wrong is like talking in church about walking away from sex. Not too useful in the heat of the moment.

**3. The most important component of one’s ethics is not so much what they are but rather one’s capacity to hold onto those ethics under tremendous pressure.** Our ethics are only as good as our capacity to stick to them. Situations that test our ethics are hot, high-pressured, uncomfortable. They promise to hurt no matter which avenue we take – there is a price to be paid. We try to figure out what will hurt the least, and who will be hurt the least. If we have time, we reason it out like a chess game – “This move will bring that, which in turn will bring such and such.” Our success in this endeavor is hampered by the complexity of the situation.

Further, a great percentage of the time the ethically sound decision will cause us direct, personal pain or humiliation. It will involve the acknowledgment of some shortcoming on our part. It’s not likely to be pleasant, even if we know the long-term benefit will bring us recognition or even if we feel our chosen action is the “right” thing to do. Rarely is the ethical option the comfortable one.

Tough situations are ones that call for self-control and patience. They’ll involve the sacrifice of the short term for the long term. They’ll demand the capacity to live with uncertainty. My ex-

perience is that these qualities are only available at a price, and that for the most part that price is painful experience.

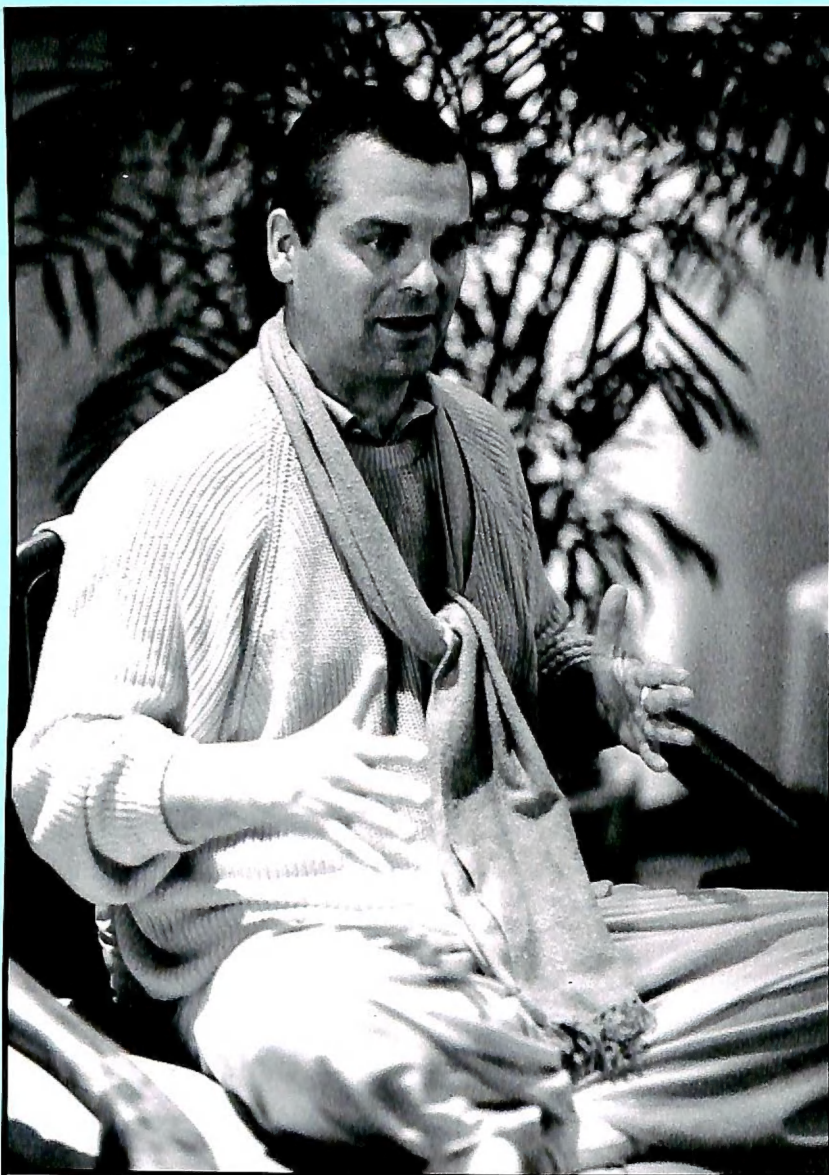
**4. There is a way to strengthen a person behaviorally so that they stick to their ethics when the heat is on, but you cannot teach that at business school.** So what makes a manager make the ethical decision when the stakes are high and the heat is really on? A recollection of classroom discussions? I suspect not. I think it comes down to a very simple formula: a person’s inner strength, plus his practice at facing pain and rising above the emotional tumult of strenuous situations.

The latter is not a quality that just comes serendipitously. It is, however, something that can be taught. Life sometimes teaches it directly, and there are always some remarkable people who on their own develop the capacity to face pain time and again, taking nourishment from it rather than allowing it to break them. But there are also a plethora of self-disciplines that cultivate this quality of inner strength. All of them acknowledge that it takes years of practice and conscious effort. Most of them also attest to the need of a supportive environment and at least one mentor/role model relationship. Not surprisingly, you find most of these disciplines suggest adherence to a rather rigorous code of ethics.

You cannot impose these self-disciplines in the business school environment, at least not in this country. They are far too personal and controversial. Students would balk at their imposition. One might argue that you could provide two components of the formula – the pain and the supportive environment – and hope that the students will find the inner strength to grow from the former. That seems to be the strategy HBS has taken thus far. But I suspect that without the self-disciplining techniques for dealing with this pain, students just live through it and hope they never have to encounter its likes again. Do they grow from it? I have my doubts.

The great thing about inner strength is that it recognizes that there’s nothing, really, to fear. Not even physical adversity. Cultivation of that strength is what makes a manager stick to his ethics even when he’s aware of the possible sacrifice and pain that will ensue. Cultivation of that strength is what makes us behave ethically. ■





*By developing  
our awareness of  
the subtle pulsation,  
our participation in  
the essential  
intimate unity  
of all life  
is revealed to us  
in a very tangible,  
palpable way.*



Nityananda Institute  
P.O. Box 1973  
Cambridge, MA 02238

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Boston, MA  
Permit No.  
58920

—Address change? New phone? Please let the Institute know: (617) 497-6263—